

REMARKS

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for meeting with him in the Patent Office to discuss this invention and application.

Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 - 14, 24, 26 and 27 are now in the case. Of these, Claims 24 and 27 are independent claims. Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 - 14 and 26 depend either mediately or immediately from Claim 24.

Claim 24 is a new claim and such claim is directed to apparatus for connection to a flat panel TV screen to improve the appearance thereof and to facilitate operation of audio and video functions related to said flat panel TV screen. The claim now clearly satisfies the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101 and 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph.

The apparatus recited in new independent Claim 24 includes a frame having a frame opening larger than the size of the screen viewing area of a flat panel TV screen and a mat releasably attached to the frame.

The mat extends inwardly from the frame into the frame opening. The recited mat is formed of material allowing passage

therethrough of wireless control transmissions and has a mat opening smaller than the frame opening.

The apparatus set forth in Claim 24 also includes connector structure for connecting the releasably attached frame and mat to the flat panel TV screen. The mat, when the releasably attached frame and mat are connected to the flat panel TV screen by the connector structure, extends from the frame toward the screen viewing area and surrounds the screen viewing area. The mat is sized and configured to allow viewing of the screen viewing area through the frame opening and through the mat opening.

It is further recited that the releasably attached frame and mat are cooperable to substantially cover the housing and substantially shield the housing from view by a person observing the screen viewing area while allowing control of audio and video functions by wireless control transmissions.

The system or combination of structural elements and cooperative relationships existing therebetween as set forth in Claim 24 is not taught by Lee or the other art of record.

An important aspect of applicant's invention resides in the ability of the apparatus to readily adapt to and be used with flat panel TV screens of different sizes. This is due to

the fact that the mat and frame of applicant's apparatus are releasably attached, that is, separate and separable structural components. One of the advantages of this arrangement is that a single sized frame may be used in conjunction with different mats, e.g. mats with different top, bottom and side widths to adapt the structure to flat panel TV screens with different sized housings and viewing areas. The apparatus is readily adapted to different sizes and models of flat panel TV screens. Utilizing the teachings of applicant's invention, a frame size may be chosen to surround a maximum size screen, with the mat being chosen or selected to "fill in" the space between the outer edge of the screen housing and the viewing area of the screen.

Also important is the recitation that the mat is formed of material allowing passage therethrough of wireless control transmissions. Thus, as also set forth in Claim 24, the releasably attached frame and mat not only are cooperable to substantially cover the housing and shield it from view but they allow control of audio and video functions by wireless control transmissions.

Lee does not teach or suggest these approaches, the frame of Lee being sized for a particular size and shape of flat

panel monitor frame. While Lee suggests the possible use of removable and replaceable trim to better match the appearance of the flat panel monitor frame to room decor, such feature does not modify in any respect the overall inner and outer dimensions of the frame itself. The trim is on the frame itself; it is not a mat. Of course, applicant's mats can also be of a different colors and textures as well as providing size adaptability.

There is no suggestion by Lee that the mat is formed of material allowing passage therethrough of wireless control transmissions.

The other patents of record, including Ive, et al, do not remedy the deficiencies of Lee as a reference.

Applicant also wishes to advise that he is not conceding at this time the appropriateness of Lee as a reference in this case under 35 U.S.C. 102(e).

Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 - 14 and 26 incorporate by reference all of the structural features and cooperative relationships set forth in new parent Claim 24.

New Claim 26 recites that the apparatus additionally comprises mat attachment structure for releasably attaching the mat to the frame whereby the mat may be removed from the frame and replaced by a substitute mat or conversely the frame

replaced by another frame. Lee does not provide any suggestion or teaching whatsoever of these features, which are supplemental to the novel overall combination set forth in parent Claim 24.

Claims 3 and 4 have been amended to depend directly from new Claim 24, Claim 3 reciting certain details regarding the connector structure and Claim 4 reciting that the mat is formed of sound transmissive material disposed over at least one loudspeaker included in the housing. Neither Lee nor any of the other references of record provide any suggestion of these features. With regard to Claim 4 specifically, Lee shows speakers in a speaker system which is in fact part of the frame and not incorporated in the flat panel monitor with which the Lee frame is utilized. That is, in the arrangement of Claim 4 an existing TV speaker is covered by the mat. A speaker is not part of the frame/mat combination.

Claim 6 depends from Claim 26 and recites that the mat attachment structure maintains the mat in a substantially planar condition. It is believed that applicant is entitled to the protection afforded by this claim since it incorporates by reference the novel overall structure set forth in Claim 26 and 24.

Claim 7 recites that the apparatus includes an electronic component receptacle on the frame and defining a receptacle interior for receiving at least one electronic component operatively associated with the flat panel screen operable by wireless control transmissions from a control external of the apparatus, the electronic component receptacle being disposed behind the frame and is substantially hidden from view by a person positioned in front of the flat panel TV screen.

There is no suggestion whatsoever of this feature in the art of record, including Lee and Ive, et al. Ive, et al relates to an arrangement very different from applicant's invention. Ive, et al relates to methods and apparatus for organizing the electric cables of peripheral equipment attached to a computer housing, the peripheral equipment disposed outside the computer housing. Not only does Ive, et al not relate to a flat panel TV screen, the Ive, et al housing cannot be utilized for receiving electronic components operatively associated with the flat panel TV screen.

Claims 9 - 14 depend mediately or immediately from Claim 7, the latter depending from Claim 24. Claims 9 - 14

recite features relating to the electronic component receptacle and its relationship to the rest of the apparatus. There is no teaching or suggestion whatsoever in the art of record of the structure of Claims 9 - 14 nor of the structure set forth in Claim 24 and intermediate Claim 7, as discussed above.

Claim 27 is a new claim directed to apparatus for connection to a flat panel TV screen to improve the appearance thereof. The claim clearly satisfies the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, and 35 U.S.C. 101.

The apparatus recites a combination of structural elements or system wherein a frame surrounds the screen viewing area of a flat panel TV screen when the frame is connected to the flat panel TV screen.

The claim also recites a wireless receiver incorporated in the frame for receiving wireless transmissions from a transmitter external of the frame operatively associated with audio/video equipment external of the frame and receiving electronic signals from the audio/video equipment.

The claim further recites that the receiver is operatively associated with the flat panel TV screen when the apparatus is connected to the flat panel TV screen for inputting the electronic signals into the flat panel TV screen.

There is no suggestion whatsoever of this claimed combination in Lee or any of the other references of record. Lee suggests incorporating electronics only related to speakers and sound or connecting existing functions of the TV to the new frame system so that they can redundantly work through their devices when placed over the TV/monitor manufacturer's control/speaker/features. In contrast, applicant's invention not only utilizes the frame to enhance appearance or aesthetics, but also to receive electronic signals from audio/video equipment external of the frame and input the electronic signals into the flat panel TV screen.

In summary, all claims now in the application are believed to clearly patentably define over the art of record, whether taken alone or in combination. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance with respect to this application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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